

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

MINUTES

Thursday  
January 8, 2009  
9:00 a.m.

Santa Cruz City Council Chambers  
809 Center St  
Santa Cruz CA

1. Roll Call

Members Present:

Dene Bustichi	Kirby Nicol
Tony Campos	Ellen Pirie
Neal Coonerty	Antonio Rivas
Randy Johnson	Pat Spence
John Leopold	Mark Stone
Aileen Loe (ex officio)	Marcela Tavantzis

Staff Present:

George Dondero	Gini Pineda
Luis Mendez	Yesenia Parra
Kim Shultz	Rachel Moriconi
Cory Caletti	Karena Pushnik
Dave Garti	Grace Blakeslee

2. Oral communications

Commissioner Campos welcomed incoming Commissioner John Leopold, First District Supervisor.

**Jack Nelson** said that current economic problems pale in comparison to the consequences of climate change and urged Commissioners to keep that in mind in their decision making. He welcomed Commissioner Leopold.

**Mike Keogh** read a letter, written by Bill Comfort and him, regarding environmental review for the rail line acquisition project.

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas

Executive Director George Dondero said that there were handouts for Item 21 and an add-on page for item 26. He asked that Item 26 be moved to follow Item 22.

**CONSENT AGENDA** (Rivas/Pirie)

**MINUTES**

4. Approved draft minutes of the December 4, 2008 regular SCCRTC meeting (Commissioner Campos abstained.)
5. Accepted draft minutes of the December 4, 2008 Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies meeting
6. Accepted draft minutes of the December 8, 2008 Bicycle Committee meeting
7. Accepted draft minutes of the December 11, 2008 Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee meeting

**POLICY ITEMS**

*No consent items*

**PROJECTS and PLANNING ITEMS**

*No consent items*

**BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS**

8. Approved staff recommendation on Proposition 1B Transit Security Funds for Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (Resolution 15-09)
9. Approved minor amendments to the *Regional Transportation Improvement Program* (Resolution 16-09)
10. Accepted status report on Transportation Development Act (TDA) Revenues

**ADMINISTRATION ITEMS**

*No consent items*

**INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS**

11. Accepted monthly meeting schedule
12. Accepted correspondence log
13. Accepted 2008 Environmental Review report
14. Accepted letters from SCCRTC committees and staff to other agencies
  - a. Letter to David Priebe, Caltrans Headquarters Division of Local Assistance regarding certification of the *"City of Santa Cruz Bicycle Transportation Plan 2008"* from Executive Director George Dondero

15. Accepted miscellaneous written comments from the public on SCCRTC projects and transportation issues
16. Accepted information items
  - a. Wasserman, Jim "California budget woes whipsaw highway contractors" Sacramento Bee, December 10, 2008
  - b. California Association of Councils of Governments (CALCOG) 2009 Priority Actions, adopted December 1, 2008

### REGULAR AGENDA

17. Accepted commissioner reports – Oral reports

Commission Chair Randy Johnson welcomed Commissioner Leopold.

18. Temporary SCCRTC committee appointments for unexpired terms

Commission Chair Johnson said that Commissioner Leopold had expressed interest in serving on both the Rail Acquisition Committee and the Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee. Commissioner Johnson read the names of the Commissioners serving on each committee. Commissioner Stone moved and Commissioner Pirie seconded to appoint Commissioner Leopold to these committees. The motion carried unanimously.

19. Accept director's report – Oral report

Executive Director George Dondero reported that he would be attending the Transportation Research Board annual meeting next week in Washington, DC. Mr. Dondero will also meet with the area's congressional representatives and their staffs, while in Washington. He then presented the Commission with a Highway 1/17 Interchange ribbon cutting video produced by Community Television.

20. Accept Caltrans report and consider action items

Aileen Loe, Caltrans District 5, noted that Julia Huggins from Scotts Valley High School won a 2009 Prius in the Caltrans statewide sweepstake essay contest for new driver safety.

Ms. Loe said that the state is actively collecting project lists for a potential federal economic stimulus package. She also reported that projects that are funded by state bond money will most likely be affected by the State's current budget problems. This is affecting a Caltrans vehicle detection project for Highway 1; however, the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes project is not affected at this time.

21. Highway 1/17 Interchange Merge Lanes Landscaping Project

Senior Planner Karena Pushnik said that landscaping for the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes project is due to begin in May 2009, ahead of schedule due to early completion of construction.

Caltrans landscape architect Brian Parker gave a PowerPoint presentation on the planned landscaping noting that mostly native trees and plants will be installed, including 400 redwood trees from cuttings of existing local trees.

Commissioners commented on the species chosen for the landscaping, the Caltrans contract and the source of water to maintain the landscaping. Mr. Parker clarified that the landscaping contract extends until 2012 in order to maintain the plants for three years after planting. He said that water for the landscaping is provided through contracts with the local jurisdictions.

22. Presentation from City of Santa Cruz on transportation projects

Chris Schneider, City of Santa Cruz Public Works, presented slides to show several recently completed transportation improvement projects using funding secured for the region from the Regional Transportation Commission. Projects included the Beach St bikeway, Laurel St safety improvements, new lighting and undergrounding of utilities on Mission St, Soquel Avenue bike lanes and safety improvements at the Soquel Avenue/Capitola Road intersection. In addition, Mr. Schneider also presented planned future projects including the Arana Gulch bike and pedestrian path, roundabouts in the beach area, Highway 1/9 improvements, Mission St alternate routes and the Murray St bridge retrofit. Most of these projects need additional funding.

Commissioners discussed some of the planned projects. Mr. Schneider said that the underpass at Highway 1 and River St (Highway 1/9 intersection) will make it safer for people to cross Highway 1.

**Les White**, SCMTD, said that plans for the Metrobase include extending the underpass to connect to Metrobase and access to UCSC through Harvey West Park.

22a. State Budget and Federal Economic Stimulus package update (formerly Item 26)

Senior Planner Rachel Moriconi gave an update on the proposed economic stimulus package stating that any approved package will likely require that projects be ready for construction within 90, 120, or 180 days. Ms. Moriconi reviewed the add-on pages for Item 26 distributed at the beginning of the meeting, which outline the staff recommendations for a process to respond to a likely economic stimulus package. These include issuing a call for projects for projects that would be ready for construction in 90 to 180 days, committing 50% of funds to local jurisdictions by formula, prioritizing projects, soliciting input from the RTC's committees and interim deadlines to prevent the loss of funds.

Commissioners discussed reauthorization of the federal transportation bill, prioritizing projects and the funding distribution formula. Ms. Moriconi said that the RTC will work closely with local jurisdictions, Caltrans and other project sponsors in order to maximize stimulus funding directed to the Santa Cruz County area. Commissioner Leopold proposed that a criterion for projects be that they create jobs in the community.

**Mark Dettle**, City of Santa Cruz Public Works, said that there is an opportunity now to do road rehabilitation projects because prices for pavement have decreased.

Commissioner Stone emphasized that it is important to keep flexibility in funding so that regional projects can move forward and moved to approve the staff recommendations that the RTC approve the following process for programming potential federal economic stimulus funds:

1. Issue a call for projects that can meet the following criteria:
  - a. Ready to start construction within 90 and/or 180 days. Depending on the final bill, projects that can be delivered within 90 days may need to be given funding priority.
  - b. Able to meet federal and state project delivery requirements within that time frame. (A checklist of the requirements, currently under development in consultation with Caltrans, will be included as part of the project proposals).
  - c. Creates new jobs.
  - d. Can demonstrate their benefit to the region's transportation system.
  - e. Listed in, or consistent with, the Regional Transportation Plan.
  - f. Can provide 20% match of non-federal funds.
2. Encourage project sponsors to use stimulus funds for existing projects that need additional funds or to free up existing funds for other transportation projects that will not be ready for construction within the next six months.
3. If no highway and road funds are dedicated (either by state or federal legislation) to local jurisdictions directly, commit to programming at least 50% of the RTC's share of stimulus funds to cities and the county based on a population formula. The balance would be programmed to projects prioritized by SCCRTC, which may include additional city or county projects. If funds are allocated by the state or federal government to cities and counties directly, consider local jurisdictions' proposals in combination with those from other project sponsors.
4. Request that project sponsors prioritize their agency's proposed projects.
5. Encourage sponsors to include projects that address multiple modes of transportation.

6. Solicit input from RTC Advisory Committees on potential projects and encourage project sponsors to consider those recommendations when developing their proposals. The RTC would consider any projects identified by committees that are not nominated by project sponsors when selecting projects.
7. If it appears likely that the federal government will approve a stimulus plan by mid-February, approve a preliminary prioritized project list at the RTC's February 5, 2008 meeting, in order to ensure project sponsors can meet impending deadlines.
8. Allow project sponsors the flexibility to trade economic stimulus funds with other project sponsors for less restrictive funds as may be appropriate under certain circumstances.
9. After the final economic stimulus plan is enacted, ensure that projects prioritized in early February are consistent with the final federal criteria and officially program funds to projects in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) and Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP).
10. In order to prevent the loss of funds to the region or state, establish interim deadlines for project sponsors to meet certain milestones (to be defined in consultation with the Interagency Technical Advisory Committee (ITAC)). In the event that a project sponsor does not meet a milestone, strictly adhere to a policy to redirect funds to other projects that have already met that milestone on a first-come-first-serve basis in order to preserve our county's share of stimulus funds.

Commissioner Pirie seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioners Pirie and Tavantzis departed the meeting.

## 23. Hwy 1 Projects – progress report

Senior Planner Kim Shultz handed out copies of the PowerPoint presentation prepared by Nolte Associates and introduced Steve Hiatt to update the Commission on the Highway 1 HOV Lanes project.

Mr. Hiatt said that the draft environmental document for the Highway 1 HOV Lanes project is scheduled for public release in summer 2009. He described key engineering issues including median widths, the Soquel Avenue interchange, regulations for storm water runoff and the 41<sup>st</sup> Ave and Bay/Porter configuration. Mr. Hiatt also reviewed the project timeline.

Paraq Mehta, Nolte Associates, updated the Commission on the status of the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes project, saying that a draft of the final environmental document for the project, including responses to the

comments from the public, is scheduled to be submitted to Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration next month.

**Jack Nelson** said that the presentation on the Auxiliary Lanes does not indicate that an Environmental impact Report (EIR) is being called for and that he thinks an EIR is necessary.

24. Hwy 1 Auxiliary Lane project - Plans Specifications & Estimates (PS&E) consultant contract

Senior Planner Kim Shultz said that the next step in the development of the Highway 1 Auxiliary Lanes project is the final design engineering phase, also known as plans, specifications and estimates. Based on consideration of the auxiliary lanes project schedule and costs and the familiarity that Nolte Associates has with the project, RTC and Caltrans staff recommend that a sole source contract be awarded to Nolte Associates for the final design engineering phase, pending a pre-award audit by Caltrans. The pre-award audit ensures rates comparable to similar types of projects and scopes of work.

Commissioner Rivas moved and Commissioner Coonerty seconded to approve the staff recommendations that the Regional Transportation Commission approve a resolution authorizing the Executive Director to execute a sole source consultant contract with Nolte Associates Inc., subject to positive findings of a pre-award audit performed by Caltrans, in an amount not to exceed \$947,525 to complete the final design engineering phase of the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Project.

The motion (Resolution 17-09) passed unanimously.

25. FY 08-09 RTC Budget Amendment

Deputy Director Luis Mendez said that the most recent Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenue estimate received from the Auditor/Controller's office was lower than the previous estimate. The most recent TDA revenue estimate results in a 4.63% reduction in anticipated revenues for the FY 08-09 RTC budget. Mr. Mendez said that because of the shortfall, it is necessary to do an immediate reduction in allocations to all TDA recipients and the RTC. He said that using some of the TDA reserve funds would offset the reductions to TDA recipients.

Commissioner Nicol moved and Commissioner Bustichi seconded to approve the Budget and Administration/Personnel (B&A/P) Committee and staff recommendations that the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) adopt a resolution) to:

1. Use some Transportation Development Act (TDA) reserve funds to help offset the fiscal year (FY) 08-09 TDA revenue shortfall while maintaining a reserve fund of no less than 3% of estimated TDA revenues;
2. Reduce the FY 08-09 TDA funds allocation to TDA recipients by 2.79% and

to the RTC by 3.49% based on the most recent Auditor-Controller's estimate for TDA revenues; and

3. Authorize staff to reduce TDA revenue payments to recipients or request reimbursements from recipients as necessary to implement the RTC's TDA revenue allocation decisions.

The motion (Resolution 18-09) passed unanimously.

26. State Budget and Federal Economic Stimulus package update (Taken out of order as Item 22a)

The Regional Transportation Commission adjourned to closed session at 11.40 am.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

27. Review of items to be discussed in Closed Session – rail line Conference with Real Property Negotiator for acquisition of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Property: Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line from Watsonville Junction to Davenport

Agency Negotiator: Kirk Trost, Miller Owen & Trost

Negotiation Parties: SCCRTC, Union Pacific

Under Negotiation: Price and Terms

### **OPEN SESSION**

The Regional Transportation Commission reconvened in public session at 12:20 pm.

28. Report on closed session - None
29. Adjourn to special meeting of the Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies
  - a. No agenda items this month
30. Next Meetings

The meeting adjourned at 12:12 pm.

The January Transportation Policy Workshop has been canceled

The next SCCRTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 5 at 9:00 a.m. at the Watsonville City Council Chambers, 275 Main Street., 4th Floor, Watsonville, CA

Respectfully submitted,

---

Gini Pineda, Staff

**ATTENDEES**

Rahn Garcia	County Counsel
Bill Comfort	
Mike Keogh	
Jack Nelson	
Cliff Walters	Sierra Railroad
Chris Schneiter	City of Santa Cruz
Mark Dettle	City of Santa Cruz
Shanna McCord	Santa Cruz <i>Sentinel</i>
Les White	SCMTD

S:\RTC\TC2009\TC0109\010809minutes.doc